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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KUNR](#) [UNGA](#) [UNSC](#) [GE](#) [JA](#) [BR](#) [IN](#)  
SUBJECT: UNGA: UNSC REFORM: INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATIONS  
ON REGIONAL REPRESENTATION - CONSENSUS BUILDING ON NEED FOR  
GREATER EQUITABLE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

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[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: The informal plenary of the General Assembly met March 24 and March 31 for intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council expansion focusing on regional representation. 68 delegations spoke during the day-and-a-half discussion with most focusing on Article 23(1) of the UN Charter and the need to enhance "equitable geographical distribution" given current realities. Most called for greater representation for Africa, Asia, Latin America/Caribbean, with some adding Eastern Europe. The Uniting for Consensus (UFC) bloc was firmly against new additional permanent seats saying they would not enhance regional representation, while the African Group reiterated their demand for two African permanent seats with veto rights. A number of small states called for a separate non-permanent seat for small-sized states, as did others for a seat for medium-sized states. Singapore raised whether it was time to take a closer look at the composition of regional groups upon which the "equitable geographical distribution" formulas are based. Liechtenstein said such an effort would be impossible. Italy suggested a non-permanent seat for the European Union, but nine delegations spoke forcefully against the concept. Brazil said that until regional sovereignty is commensurate with member state sovereignty such a discussion is meaningless. The next session is scheduled for April 7 on the size of an enlarged Council and Council working methods. End summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Comment: Given member states' uncertainty over the exact definition of the topic of "regional representation," this was the least productive intergovernmental negotiating session to date. In addition, the African Group's reiteration, without deviation, of its Ezulwini Consensus position through 19 separate speakers also resulted in a substantial stifling of discussion. Though the Italian and Indian Perm Reps traded barbs at the end of the March 24th session, the March 31 interactive session was tame. End comment.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council expansion continued on March 24 and March 31 with meetings of the informal plenary on the third of five key issues -- "regional representation." 68 countries spoke during the three sessions and a further eight took the floor for a second time during the interactive portion of the final

session on March 31. Afghan Perm Rep and Chairman of the Intergovernmental Negotiations Zahir Tanin circulated a letter to the membership on March 20, as he did before debate on the two previous issues (see reftels). His letter included an extensive excerpt on the topic from the Open-ended Working Group's 61st session report (A/61/47). (Note: USUN e-mailed a copy of the letter to IO/UNP. End note.)

#### "Equitable Geographical Representation"

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¶4. (SBU) A number of delegations commented on the lack of clarity on the actual topic "regional representation." Most delegations focused their interventions on Article 23(1) of the UN Charter and the issue of "equitable geographical distribution" and how to interpret that to better reflect current realities. Most delegations called for greater representation on the Council from Africa, Asia, and Latin America/Caribbean, with some adding Eastern Europe. Some delegations clarified that there should be additional permanent member seats for Africa, Asia, and Latin America and additional non-permanent member seats for all of the previously-mentioned regions and Eastern Europe. The Brazilian Deputy Perm Rep called for an improvement in equitable geographical distribution in both categories.

¶5. (SBU) All UFC members reiterated their opposition to an increase in permanent seats, said that new permanent seats should not be denoted as enhancing equitable geographical distribution, and called for an improvement in the equitable

geographical distribution of non-permanent seats. The Italian Perm Rep said he doubted the "dogma of representation" put forth by the G4 that a regional group would feel more represented if a member from that same regional group obtained a permanent seat. The Mexican Perm Rep specifically asked how regional representation would be enhanced by having a new permanent member from an area already over-represented (i.e. Germany). The Turkish representative said that additional permanent seats would be to the detriment of greater regional representation and noted that adding four new permanent members would mean that 20 new non-permanent members would not be able to serve in their stead.

¶6. (SBU) G4 supporter and African Group member Mauritius, on the other hand, asked if the intent of Security Council reform was to get more members to serve on the Security Council or to make the Security Council more effective and efficient. G4 member Japan said that new permanent members should provide "exceptional contributions to the maintenance of international peace and security" and then there should be equitable geographical distribution. He also stressed that new non-permanent members should be elected by the entire membership but did note that each regional group uses a different set of criteria to choose its candidates for the non-permanent seats.

¶7. (SBU) 19 African states, with Sierra Leone again in the lead for the African Group, each uniformly reiterated the need to right the historical injustice of Africa's under-representation on the Council through two permanent seats with veto and five non-permanent seats.

¶8. (SBU) Jamaica, representing CARICOM, suggested a non-permanent seat for small island developing states in Africa, GRULAC, and Asia and a separate non-permanent seat for developing or medium-sized states. The St. Vincent & the Grenadines Perm Rep suggested that this be a "small island developing state" (SIDS) seat and noted there are 37 such states as designated by ECOSOC. A number of states voiced support for both the small and medium-sized state proposals, including Mauritius, Pakistan, El Salvador, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Malta, Mexico, Nicaragua, the Philippines, the

Solomon Islands, and Tonga.

¶9. (SBU) Nine Eastern European states, including Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia, and the Ukraine, called for an additional non-permanent seat for Eastern Europe.

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¶10. (SBU) The French representative reiterated France's support for an expansion of both categories of membership, its support of the G4 for permanent seats, and for an African presence among the permanent members. He raised the possibility of an Arab permanent member and reiterated the intermediate option. The Chinese representative stressed the need to make the Council more representative by addressing the under representation of African states and the access of other small and medium-sized states to the Council. The UK representative stressed the need for broad geographic representation and reiterated the UK's support for the G4's quest for permanent seats and an African seat.

Time to change regional groups?

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¶11. (SBU) The Singapore Perm Rep noted that none of the current proposals on the table (G4, UFC, African Group) will result in an improvement in equitable geographical distribution. He proposed looking at the current regional groups and seeing if they truly represent current realities. For example, is the distinction between the Western European and Others Group (WEOG) and the Eastern European Group (EEG) still valid post-Cold War? (Note: The Liechtenstein representative later responded that WEOG is over-represented in the Council. End note.) In the Asian Group, the

Singaporean continues, there is a member who is also part of the EU. He suggested re-examining our basic assumptions regarding the concept of "region." The Liechtenstein representative in the interactive portion responded to Singapore's statement and said that it would be almost impossible to revise regional configurations at this time.

A role for regional organizations? No.

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¶12. (SBU) A number of other delegations also commented on whether there was a role for regional organizations on the Council. The Italian Perm Rep later suggested that a seat for the European Union be alternated between WEOG and EEG since there is a "big gap between what the EU does and what it could do in the Security Council." He noted that a Charter amendment would be needed to allow for a regional organization to participate with full member privileges at the UN. (Comment: USUN viewed Italy's EU seat proposal as clearly meant to complicate the debate, given that it had little support from other EU member states. End comment.) The Singapore Perm Rep noted that it is likely premature to discuss regional seats since even bodies like the EU which are suppose to have a common foreign and security policy remain divided on the issue of regional representation.

¶13. (SBU) Nine delegations spoke out against a role for regional organizations in the United Nations, with most saying such a discussion was premature since few regional organizations had common political policies. The UK representative stated that individual member states serve on the Council and the UK does not support regional seats on the Council as it would not enhance the Council's efficiency. Spain cited Chapter II of the UN Charter which only refers to states as members and said the UN should not be opened up to regional organizations. The Brazilian Deputy Perm Rep said that regions could play a role when regional sovereignty is commensurate with member state sovereignty. Until that

becomes the case, he said, a discussion of seats for regional organizations is meaningless. Others suggested saving this topic for a future review conference.

#### Suggestions on working methods

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¶14. (SBU) Canada suggested some improvements to working methods to improve representation, including a return to the more obligatory nature of Article 35 of the UN Charter which states that any member "may bring any dispute" to the attention of the Council. He compared the language of Article 35 to Rule 37 of the Provisional Rules of Procedure of the Security Council which only states that a member "may be invited, as the result of a decision of the Security Council, to participate, without vote, in the discussion of any question brought before the Security Council." He also proposed that parties to a dispute be regularly included in Council discussions, as well as troop contributing countries (TCCs), especially during Council discussions of peacekeeping mandates (Article 44). India later referred to this and commended Canada for raising it.

#### Upcoming meetings

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¶15. (SBU) The Chair announced that the next meeting will be April 7 on the "size of an enlarged Council and working methods of the Security Council" and then the last of the five key issues, "the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly," will be discussed on April 20.  
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